

PATENT

Atty. Dkt. No. 2000-0619

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

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FIG. 1 is a conceptual representation of a content management architecture. Content can be distributed to clients from either origin servers, e.g. 161, 162, or from clusters of edge servers, e.g. 151, 152, ... 155 in a network 100. It is advantageous to have a content manager 110 which is able to selectively pre-populate some of the edge servers with content based on various factors, such as a negotiated service agreement, load, the particular service type, other policies, etc. In particular, for example, for high-quality streaming of media, it is desirable not to have all of the content populating all of the edge server clusters. In this type of environment it becomes crucial for a client to connect to an edge server that already has the content it is requesting. The present invention is directed to various mechanisms which facilitate effective content management.

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FIG. 3 and 4 illustrate the two different methods of redirection. FIG. 3 is a conceptual representation of a network 300 using media redirection utilizing a protocol-level redirect, specifically in the context of the RTSP protocol. At step 301, a media client 380 has a URL, e.g. "rtsp://sr.target25.com/clip.rm". At step 302, the domain name system 311 resolves the domain name "sr.target25.com" to any of the streaming redirect servers 320. At step 303, the media client 380 connects to the chosen streaming redirect server 320 with the URL "rtsp://sr.target25.com/clip.rm". At step 304, the streaming redirect server 320 decides on an "appropriate" content server for this request, for example redirecting the client to an edge server 351 or 352, with the URL "rtsp://mec10.att.net/att/clip.rm". The IP address of the edge server 351 or 352 can be utilized to prevent a DNS lookup. Then at step 305, the media client 380 connects to the media edge cluster stream the desired content. The media edge cluster 351 or 352 may already have the content in a cache or may obtain the content from a media origin server 361 or 362.

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FIG. 4 is a conceptual representation of a network 400 using content redirection utilizing a dynamic helper file. At step 401, a user utilizing a web client 490 selects a media clip from a web page on a web server 495. The web server 495, at step 402, dynamically generates a helper file (e.g., a ".ram" or ".asx" file) with the appropriate URL, e.g., "mms://mec10.att.net/clip.asx". At step 403, the web client 490 invokes the media player 485, which contacts the domain name system 411 at step 404 to ~~resolves~~ resolve "mec10.att.net". Alternatively, the URL could be expressed with an IP address to avoid the DNS lookup. Then, at step 405, the media player 485 connects to a media edge cluster 451 or 452, to stream the desired content. The media edge cluster 451 or 452 may already have the content in a cache or may obtain the content from a media origin server 461 or 462.